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CONTACT: Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez (916) 651-5405

Nancy.KirshnerRodriguez@women.ca.gov

**California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls Announces Election of
Lupita Cortez Alcalá as Chair and Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia as First Vice Chair**

SACRAMENTO –The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has elected Lupita Cortez Alcalá as the Commission’s new Chair. Alcalá succeeds Geena Davis, who stepped down as Chair after serving two terms and will remain on the Commission. Alcalá and newly elected First Vice Chair Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia lead a commission passionately committed to creating greater opportunities for the more than 19 million women and girls in California. As leaders of the Commission, Alcalá and Garcia are committed to building upon the legacy of former chair Geena Davis and expanding the Commission’s efforts to create greater gender equality.

“We need to champion access, representation, and opportunity for women and girls so that California can be global leader in gender equity,” Cortez Alcalá said. “I am honored to be leading the Commission on behalf of California’s women and girls and I look forward building on the progress the Commission has made.”

The First Vice Chair Garcia stated, “I came to Sacramento committed to be a change agent for my community, my district and my state. I plan to use my existing leadership role with the Legislative Women’s Caucus and my new leadership role with the Commission to continue to push forward policies that bring women closer to parity in all aspects of society in a coordinated fashion, from formulation to implementation.”

The 17 member Commission played a key role in the recent Workplace Justice Summit and State STEM Symposium.

“In 2016, expanding the Commission’s leadership on STEM opportunities for women and girls, looking at ways to shrink the wage gap for women of color, addressing the continued rise in campus sexual assault, and examining the challenges facing California’s ever-growing population of older women in poverty will be among our top initiatives,” said Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, Commission Executive Director. “I look forward to working with each commissioner to maximize their opportunities for impact.”

Alcalá, who has been a champion for better educational outcomes for California students of California for her entire career, is the incoming Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. She has served as Deputy Superintendent for the Instruction and Learning Support Branch at the California Department of Education (CDE) since 2011. Alcalá oversaw the creation of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) office at CDE, and the first Statewide STEM Symposium with a focus on girls and

underrepresented youth. As a member of the Aspen Institute Action Forum, her goal is to increase the number of female students enrolled in STEM courses in the state. Alcalá was appointed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson as his designee on the Commission. Prior to joining CDE, Lupita served as Deputy Legislative Secretary for California Governor Gray Davis. In that capacity, she advised the Governor on all Kindergarten through grade 12 and higher-education legislation and served as a liaison to the education community. Alcalá has worked personally and professionally to ensure that girls and underrepresented youth are equitably represented. She earned a master's degree in planning administration and social policy at Harvard University's School of Education, and her bachelor's degree from the University of California at San Diego.

Assemblymember Cristina Garcia represents California's 58th Assembly District, and serves as Assistant Majority Floor Leader and Vice-Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus. Garcia is a tireless activist for higher ethical standards in government and a passionate advocate on issues concerning Women and Children. Previously a math teacher for thirteen years, Cristina taught statistics at the University of Southern California, mathematics at Los Angeles City Community College and middle school and high school mathematics through the Jaime Escalante Program at East Los Angeles Community College and at Huntington Park High School. Cristina lives in the in the Southeast Los Angeles community of Bell Gardens, where she was raised and attended local public schools. She earned a Bachelor's Degree from Pomona College, a Master's Degree and a Secondary teaching credential from Claremont Graduate University and is presently a doctoral candidate at USC. Cristina has been recognized by California Forward with the distinguished California Forward Thinkers Award, and previously earned the Distinguished Woman of the Year Award from the California State Assembly. In 2013, the Latino Journal & CAFÉ de California presented the Spirit of Latina Award to Assemblymember Garcia for her exemplary work to strengthen California's Democracy and advance the representation of Latinas in Public Service.

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The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls was established in 1965 to identify and work to eliminate inequities in state laws, practices and conditions that affect California's women and girls. The Commission regularly assesses gender equity in health, safety, employment, education and equal representation, the military and the media. The Commission provides leadership through research, policy and program development, education, outreach and collaboration, advocacy and strategic partnerships. The 17 member Commission includes three State Senators, three Assemblymembers, the State Labor Commissioner, and ten appointed public members – seven by the Governor, one by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, one by the Senate Committee on Rules and one by the Assembly Speaker.